(25.)

The Humble Advice AND EARNEST DESIRES Of certain well-affected MINISTERS,

LECTURERS of *BANBURY* in the County of *Oxon*, and of *BRACKLY* in the County of *Northampton*,

To his Excellency *THOMAS* Lord *FAIRFAX*,

General of the Forces raised by the Authority of PARLIAMENT; and to the General Councell of WARRE:

Presented *January* 25. 1649, by two of the Subscribers.

ALSO,

A LETTER to the Reverend Ministers of the Gospel within the Province of *London*, Dated the 21 of this instant *January*.

Imprimatur: *James Cranford*, *Jan.* 25. 1649.

LONDON, Printed for *James Boler*, at the Mary-gold in *Fleet-street*. 1649.

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Humble Advice

To his Excellency the Lord Generall *FAIRFAX*, and his Generall Councel of WARRE,

The humble Advice and earneſt Deſires of certain wel-affected Miniſters, Lecturers of Banbury *and* Brackley.

MAy it pleaſe your Excellency, and You, Honoured Gentlemen, Whereas by the bleſſing of God upon your unwearied endeavours, ſubduing the common enemy more then once, we were in a fair way of being reſtored to a long deſired enjoyment of our Religion in purity, our Perſons and Eſtates in freedom; we accept at all times, and this day acknowledg it with great thankfulneſſe. Nevertheleſſe, when we compare the ſacred and ſolemn Oaths of Allegeance and Supremacy, by Statute Law, the Proteſtation and Nationall Covenant by authority of both Houſes of Parliament (obliging us to the Reformation of Religion, preſervation of his Majeſties Perſon and juſt Power, the defence of the Priviledges of Parliament and Liberties of the Subject) tendered unto, preſt upon, and all or moſt ta-

ken by us, and ſo conſiderable a part of this Kingdom: Together with ſome late Petitions, Declarations and Repreſentations to your Excellency and the Generall Councel of War, and your late Remonſtrance to the Commons of *England* aſſembled in Parliament, and ſome proceedings thereupon, both in relation to his Majeſtie, and ſeverall Members of Parliament: And withall, our own Station and Commiſſion from God to be Watchmen and Seers to his people, to ſtand upon our Watch-tower and give warning either of approaching ſin or ruine to the Nation: We cannot without wounding our own conſciences, and betraying the truſt repoſed in us, ſit down in ſilence; but are conſtrained, with all due reſpects to your Excellency and your Councell (and we hope, without the leaſt offence) to repreſent and deſire as followeth.

Firſt, In reference to his Majeſtie.

That although we are not ignorant of, nor can in the leaſt approve the profanation and abuſe of our ſolemn Covenant by the late unlawfull Ingagement from *Scotland*; yet we cannot but repreſent to you, and manifeſt to the world our utter diſſent from all proceedings againſt his Majeſties Crown and Life; and that upon theſe enſuing grounds of Conſcience and Prudence.

1. The ſacred Scripture (the onely unerring rule for all undertakings) neither by precept, or precedent, or other way doth warrant or countenance ſuch actings of Subjects againſt their lawfull Soveraign: But this remaineth upon divine Record, That when the ten Tribes forſook their King, they alſo forſook their God, and had neither a good King, nor ſcarce a good day afterwards. And our own Chronicles do ſadly tell us of a Deluge of bloud and calamities overflowing our Anceſtours upon the

the Depoſition of *Edward* the Second, and *Richard* the Second, both Kings of *England*.

2. Our Law-books (as we are informed by Parliament Declarations, and as hath been lately acknowledged by your Remonſtrance) ſuppoſe the King can do no wrong; If ſo, then (as wee conceive) hee cannot by any written Law forfeit his Crown and Life to his people.

3. We have ſolemnly bound our ſelves by Oaths and Covenant (from which no Authority on earth can abſolve us) not to prejudice the Perſon, nor diminiſh the juſt Authority of the King; and therefore, without manifeſt perjury (as we conceive) we cannot conſent either to the Depoſition of his Majeſty, or the deprivation of his life. And here we humbly preſent to your moſt ſerious conſideration Gods remarkable avenge upon the Houſe of *Saul*, of the breach of Covenant made by *Joſhuah* with the *Gibeonites* ſome hundreds of yeers before; and that although the Scriptures tell us, hee did it out of his zeal to the Houſe of *Iſrael* and *Judah*.

Fourthly, The way of proceeding againſt his Majeſtie will be ſo far from ſpeeding a Settlement, that we beleeve, it will unvaoydably tend to the ſcandal and hazard of Religion, and loſſe of Liberty.

1. In the judgement of our enemies: This will be thought to verifie thoſe foul aſperſions ſo often abjured by the Parliament, us, and other their friends, that the deſigne in our late juſt Defence, was the ruine of his Majeſty, and the ſubverſion of Regal Government.

2. It will hazard Religion, by rendring the Profeſſors of it odious to the Common Enemy without, by ſhaking the foundation of our Union with *Scotland*, and by making

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an irreparable breach amongſt men of the ſame pious and honeſt intereſt at Home.

3. As for Liberty, (ſo much contended for) it cannot be denied but it muſt be an invitation to forraign Princes to invade us; (their intereſt being the ſame:) And the rather, conſidering the *German*-Peace ſo lately concluded, by means whereof they cannot but be ſupplyed with Armies of Mercinaries that gape after ſuch an opportunity.

But principally (we fear) this may give Life to the preſent deſign now on foot in *Ireland* (which your and our Souls abhor) for the utter ruine of our Friends there, and ſpeedy invading of this Kingdom.

And finally, that this may tend to a perpetual engagement of the three Kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland* in blood, all being ſo deeply intereſſed in the perſon of the King; and that inevitably, becauſe the Prince of Wales (the Heir apparent to the Crowns of all the three Kingdoms) is now at liberty, and may probably be proclaimed and crowned in *Scotland* and *Ireland*, and ſo not likely to want power to ſeat him on his Fathers Throne here in *England*, yea, and that poſſibly without Conditions, to the utter ruine of all that have adhered to the Parliament.

Fifthly, whereas it is ſaid, That by his Majeſties departing from his Parliament, ſetting up his Standard, and levying War againſt his People, they are abſolved from their allegiance to him, notwithſtanding the Oaths before mentioned: We well remember that thoſe Oaths, together with the Covenant, have been Conſtantly preſt upon ſeveral Members of the Parliament, and other Subjects in this Kingdom, to the Time of the Late Treaty, if not ſince; and that notwithſtnding the aforeſaid particulars now charged againſt his Majeſty, and therefore muſt needs be either

either vain, and to a High prophanation of the dreadfull name of God) or else obligatory. And were they not so judged, we know no convincing reason why they should be now suspended or abolished. As to the execution of Justice upon Delinquents covenanted for, we protest that the Dethroning or death of his Majesty, in prosecution of Justice, never entered into our hearts: The same Covenant making speciall provision for the preservation of his Majesties Person, Honor and Authority.

Sixthly and lastly, His Majesty was not taken in Battail, but having a Military power, and strong Garisons in *England*, besides forces in *Scotland* and *Ireland*, did (being invited and encouraged (as we think) by severall joint Declarations and Protestations of the Parliament of both Kingdoms, (promising security to his Royall person) surrender himself to the Army of our Brethren of *Scotland*, and by them was delivered to the Commissioners of the Parliament of *England*, upon express promise (as we are informed) that no violence should be offered to his Person; and farther, when His Majesty went from *Hampton Court*, we suppose him at Liberty to have gone for *Scotland* or *Ireland*, but in the forementioned confidence in Parliamentary Declarations, and the reallity of the Armies intentions towards him, (for we are ignorant of other sufficient cause) he voluntarily betook himself to the Isle of Wight, then in your power.

Secondly, we declare in reference to the Parliament, and Priviledges thereof;

That calling to minde his Majesties attempt to seiz upon the five Members, which was declared by the Parliament, and acknowledged by the King himself a breach of Priviledg, and withall the Ordinance of Parliament of

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the 20 of *August*, 1647. declaring the unconstitutional absence of divers Members of both Houses, by reason of the horrid force upon them, to be a ground sufficient for the making null and void all votes passed in both or either House of Parliament, from the 26 of *July*, to their return *August* 6th; we cannot but conceive the seizing and secluding of divers Members (many of them being well known to us to be faithfull Patriots, and (we are confident) have not apostatized to the contrary party) to be a breach of Priviledge of Parliament, which in our Covenant we are sworn in our places to defend; and do therefore crave leave to dissent.

Thirdly, We declare in reference to Religion,

That although our soules abhorr that grand designe of the Devill and his Agents, to decry all religious and zealous professors, under the name of Sectaries and Independents, and although we do willingly grant, and heartily desire that the interest of all Godly and honest men may be carefully provided for, and secured as farre as is consistent with the word of God, our Covenant and publique Peace, and that men of different apprehensions in matters of less importance, may not therefore be rendred utterly uncapable of all Offices of power and trust; yet considering of what dangerous consequence an universal Toleration in matter of Religion, so much laboured after in the beginning of Reformation, by the Jesuitical party, must needs prove to Church and State; we presume timously to declare, That such a Toleration is no way consonant to the Word of God, and is repugnant to our National Covenant.

And now having herein according to our consciences so fully and freely discharged our duties to God and the Kingdom, and as much as in us lyeth, freed our selves

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from the guilt of the blood, miſery and ruine that threaten us and the whole Kingdom, if not timely prevented: We moſt humbly deſire as followeth:

Firſt, that your Excellency will be pleaſed (for the more ſpeedy ſettlement of the true Proteſtant Religion and publique peace of the Kingdom, to improve your utmoſt, That the impriſoned and ſecluded Members, that cannot juſtly be charged for betraying their Truſt, may be forthwith reſtored; and ſuch as ſhall be charged to be tryed by Parliament, according to their Priviledg.

Secondly, that weighing in a juſt balance the reaſons before alledged, with many more that may be added in relation to his Majeſty, we humbly deſire your Excellency will be pleaſed by all lawfull means to endevour the ſuſpending of all proceedings againſt his Majeſties Crown and Life, untill advice had (in point of Conſcience) with the Reverend Aſſembly of Divines, and the Church of *Scotland*, touching the ſeverall Oaths that lye both upon us and them, and in point of prudence, with the Kingdom of *Scotland*, who are jointly concerned with us in his Majeſty.

Thirdly, and laſtly, that you will endeavour a right underſtanding, a good correſpondence and mutuall confidence between King, Parliament, City, Army, and all the well-affected perſons of the Kingdom, as alſo between the two Kingdoms of England and Scotland, thereby to fruſtrate the great expectations of the Popiſh arty, who are high in their hopes, by reaſon of our preſent ſad diviſions and diſtractions promiſing

to themſelves (and doe not ſtick to declare it) a greater advantage to them and their Religion now, then if the King had prevailed by an abſolute Conqueſt. As alſo to haſten relief to our poor Brethren in bleeding and gaſping Ireland, for whom England hath kept the ſolemn monethly Faſt, near ſeven years together.

But (to draw towards a concluſion) we do here ſolemnly profeſſ, That it is not the leaſt receding from our firſt found principles upon which either with our perſons, prayers, purſes, or al we engaged with the Parliament in the firſt and ſecond war; nor our own intereſt in Church patrimony or power, (God will provide) or indeed any other byaſs of ſelf-ends, or reſpects whatſoever, did move us thus to declare our ſelves, but the meer Conſcience of the many Oaths of God, in which the Parliament, You, We, and the generality of the wel-affected in the Kingdom indiſpenſably ſtand bound before God, Angels and Men, That we deſire to waſh our hands, as from the blood of all men, ſo eſpecially of our dread Soveraign; and to approve our ſelves innocent of all that blood and miſery the depoſing and taking away his Majeſties life, will (in our apprehenſion) involve us, our poſterity, and all men profeſſing godlineſs in the three Kingdoms in. We doe therefore from our ſoul beſeech and importune you, and every one of you, as Men, Gentlemen, and Chriſtian Souldiers, by all that is or can be dear to good men, as you deſire to render a good account of your actions at the great Day to the righteous Judg of heaven & earth, That you will forbear doing ought in the premiſes, which may wound the conſcience, or peirce the hearts of any of Gods people (who are all alike with you, or

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any of you, precious to him as the apple of his eye) which may rend and tear the bowels of this your and our native Country, and occasion the common Enemy to blaspheme the Majesty, Truth and Cause of our God and your God: And further to contribute the utmost skil, study and endeavours of you and every of you in your proper places, (and the great Counsellour and mighty God direct you all) to remove ours and the Kingdoms fears, to remedie the present abounding distempers, and present and universall destruction; That we and the generations to come may rise up and call you blessed, and so eminent a Preservation of the Kingdom in such an extremity, may be had in everlasting remembrance.

Zach. Breedon Minister of *Creton.*
William Palmer Minister of *Rawsam.*
Josias Bunn Minister of *Turvy-Weston.*
John Hoffman Minister of *Wotton.*
Thomas Harris Minister of *Brackley.*
Robert Harris Minister of *Shalston.*
Edward Whirley Minister of *Steeple-Aston.*
John Cave Minister of *Middleton-Chynie.*
Samuel Welles Minister of *Banbury.*
Edward Archer Minister of *Sommerton.*
Robert Wilde Minister of *Ayenho.*
Tho. Hodges, Minister of *Souldern.*
Richard White Minister of *Wigginton.*
Stephen Sedgwick Minister of *Tinswick.*
Cresswell Whately Minister of *Tad-Marton.*
John Eyre Minister of *Laurence-Marston.*
John Bayly Minister of *Frenkford.*
Timothy Perkins Minister of *Evenly.*
Samson Smart Minister of *Gritworth.*

Reverend

Reverend, and Worthy in the Lord,

THe great breaches which now for ſome time have, and ſtill are made upon thoſe publick Endearments to us, (*viz.*) Religion, our King and Parliament, do ſorely preſſe us, and wound us deeply; What ſhall we do? We cannot keep ſilence, we dare not; if we ſhould, our Conſciences would not. Great are our fears, but greater are our duties, for the performance of which, we have trampled down all our fears, and through Gods mercy have met together, and reſolved with one heart and voice to own the Vows of God upon us, and according to their obligation (if we can do no more, yet) at leaſt to deliver our own ſouls. In order whereunto, we, and ſome others of our Brethren have choſen and ſent up our Brethren, Mr. *Samuel Welles* Miniſter of *Banbury*, and Mr. *John Bayly* Miniſter of *Frenckford*, to wait upon you at *London*: whoſe Labours in this very thing alſo, according to the wiſdom and zeal given you, we hear of, and rejoyce in, praying for you, that they may not be in vain in the Lord: They will acquaint you with our *Humble Advice to the Lord Generall and his Generall Counſel*; which (thongh of it ſelf it be a poor nail hammered by us inferiour Workmen) yet being faſtened by the hands of ſuch Maſters of the Aſſemblies as your ſelves) may enter the deeper, and ſtick the faſter. We beſeech you to peruſe it, and to direct them in all things conducing to the right mannaging of it; and to admit our few mites into the Treaſury of your Religion and Loyalty. And the God and Father of lights direct and aſsiſt you and us to ſhine as lights in the midſt of a froward generation. To his Mercies we commend you, and reſt

Your Brethren and fellow-labourers
in the Goſpel of Chriſt,

Thomas Hodges. *Zach. Breedon.*
John Eyre. *John Cave.*
Timothy Perkins. *Joſias Bunn.*
Robert Harris. *Thomas Harris.*
Samſon Sumner. *Edm. Archer.* *Robert Silde.*

FINIS.